

**SUNNYSIDE MEDICAL CENTRE – PATIENT REFERENCE GROUP  
REPORT OF PROGRESS TO DATE (MARCH 2013)**

*Dear Sunnyside Patient Representative*

*You may be aware that 2012 was the second year of our engagement with a large representative group of patients to help us to identify areas of service provision that are working well and those where we can improve. With all the changes that are taking place in the NHS our focus is very much on the future. We have already successfully implemented a number of changes since last year (see section H below) and following this years feedback we are now making some further commitments with special focus on our IT facilities. These intentions are also documented below. Our GP partners wish to deliver the best possible clinical service to their patients.*

*The information below explains the progress that we have made during the past year, identifying our patients concerns, and the plans we have to address them.*

**A. Developing a group structure that gains the views of patients and enables feedback**

The practice has a relatively young patient population when compared to many other practices in Portsmouth. It was therefore essential that the membership of our Patient Reference Group (PRG) had a fair proportion of young contributors. Most of these patients are likely to actively use the latest technology including the internet and mobile phones. This reassures us that online surveys are an ideal way to engage a large proportion of our patients. For those patients who do not use the internet an option to complete a hardcopy survey while in surgery is also provided. The ethnicity of Sunnyside patients is quite diverse so the recruitment of PRG members needs to encourage membership opportunities from all ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the practice boundaries cover some areas of high deprivation so it is important to ensure that members from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to join and contribute to the group.

Accordingly, to ensure that we provided varied opportunities to join the PRG covering different ethnic backgrounds, age ranges and personal profiles, a number of distinct PRG recruitment drives were run in the period up to end of November 2012. These included:

1. Patients were given an open invitation to join the PRG from GP's, nurses or receptionists when attending routine patient consultations.
2. During the flu clinics held in October, patients were approached to complete a hardcopy survey and also invited to provide contact information so they could be added to the PRG
3. Staff members approached patients waiting in the reception area on an adhoc basis.
4. Advertising efforts included posters in the surgery, and a TV bulletin page encouraging all patients to join the group.

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**B. Group Membership**

As of the end of December 2012 a total of 230 patients signed up to the PRG with many patients opting to remain on the PRG register from the previous year. 142 patients were female and 88 were male. Most importantly, the patient group was comprised of a broad range of ages as follows:

<24 14 patients  
25-35 56 patients  
35-45 47 patients  
45-55 48 patients  
55-65 33 patients  
65+ 32 patients

In early November our membership application drive was closed to allow us to focus on obtaining feedback to our survey. Although we made a positive attempt to encourage involvement from all cultural groups, the group is still predominantly white British.

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>No of patients</b>
White British	210
White & Black Caribbean	1
White European	6
Bangladeshi	2
Indian	5
Black or Black British African	3
Pakistani	1
White and Asian	0
Other	2

All consent forms were retained and the patient data recorded. PRG members were assigned to an e-mail distribution list (if appropriate) so that email/electronic surveys could be easily sent.

**C. Agree the key priority areas**

The document used to obtain sign-up and consent for the PRG asked patients to prioritise any concerns within 8 key areas of practice business that were previously discussed and agreed at meetings of the Sunnyside Patient Group.

- Clinical Care
- Reception Issues
- Getting to the surgery
- Patient Awareness and education
- Getting an appointment
- Opening times
- Buildings and facilities
- Waiting times

In addition a further option allowed for any additional comments to be made. Patients were asked to nominate as many areas as they thought needed our attention and these

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results were recorded on our database. The 3 areas receiving the most votes would provide the areas of questions that the patient survey would focus on. The three areas on which the survey would be focussed were as follows:

- Getting an appointment
- Waiting times
- Patient education and awareness

### **D. Collate our patient's opinions through the use of a survey**

The surgery has an online account with survey monkey and created a questionnaire comprised of 8 questions broadly matching the key priorities and the areas of specific interest to the surgery. The questions were designed to cover GP appointments, clinical excellence, waiting times and various general aspects of patient education and awareness.

The online survey was released for responses from the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 and ran until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. During this time the patients were given a link to the survey by e-mail. A follow up request to complete the survey was issued to PRG members before the survey was closed.

Of the 230 patients who were members of the PRG, 69 (30%) of these patients completed the survey online. This is still considered a reasonably good return rate despite a relatively large number of non respondents. A further 50 hardcopy survey questionnaires were also completed, thus giving a total response from 119 patients.

### **E. Summary of survey results for 2012**

- 91.3% of patients said they were happy with confidentiality during telephone conversations with receptionists
- 82.6% of those responding said they were happy about patient confidentiality when attending our duty team
- 94 % of patients said the GP's listened to their requests and dealt with them appropriately. The figure dropped to 91.2% for nurses and 69.6% for reception.
- A total of 73.9% of patients said they saw the GP or nurses within 20 minutes of their appointment time (excluding duty team)
- 84.1% of patients would be prepared to wait longer to get an appointment with their GP of choice
- Only 17.6% of patients were aware that we recently set-up a facebook page.
- We gained great encouragement from the fact that 98% of all hardcopy questionnaires showed that patients are happy with the advice, guidance and attention from our reception and clinical teams, and they are equally happy with the facilities and buildings at Sunnyside.
- General comments often praised the services that we offer but patients did raise further concerns about the following;
  - Lack of sufficient car parking
  - Getting appointments
  - Lack of confidentiality/discretion when dealing with patients in duty area
  - Online appointments
  - Repeat prescription process to be made easier

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**F. Provide the PRG with the opportunity to discuss the findings and reach agreement with the PRG on changes to services**

A draft copy of this report was mailed to all members of the PRG during week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Comments or objections received were considered by the partners and the report finalise in late January 2013.

**G. Agree action plan with PRG for 2012 - 2013**

Further actions agreed from the results of this year's survey are as follows:

- All staff will be reminded of the need to respect patients' wishes and provide absolute confidentiality wherever needed. Should a patient seen in duty need to assure confidentiality then a private room/consultation will always be offered. Furthermore, we will increase or advertising about the option to assure increased confidentiality on request.
- Online repeat prescriptions, fully integrated within our clinical system will be implemented. The existing website facility will be removed after the new implementation. This is in addition to the phased implementation of online appointments (as agreed the previous year).
- To meet the growing demand for greater use of technology, staff changes will be implemented to provide more technical resource for new IT projects and ongoing IT support.
- To help with patient check-in times and overall waiting times, a new patient self check-in system will be purchased and installed. We decommissioned our old system approximately 2 years ago.

**H. Review of actions from last year**

The following summary provides you with an update on the actions that were agreed as part of last years survey.

**Priority 1 - Getting an appointment.**

The results of the survey indicated that generally the existing systems satisfy the patient needs and work well under normal circumstances, but they would benefit from some investigation and improvements to cope with periods of excessive demands. The telephone system generally seems to work well.

1. **ACTION** - The surgery will **investigate** online appointment booking systems and text appointment reminder systems that will integrate with the existing clinical system. Selection of the number and type of appointments made available for online allocation would need to be carefully chosen. Proposals will be considered by the GP partners  
**OUTCOMES** - The partners developed an IT strategy during 2012 and online appointments and text reminders were an integral part of the strategy. Critical to

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the future strategy, was an improvement in the response time on our clinical system. For various reasons we have suffered greatly with frequent system crashes and very slow response time. Changes were implemented by INPS (our system provider) in November 2012 and significant improvements have been successfully delivered. Furthermore, our N3 internet connection speed is being improved before the beginning of April 2013, increasing our transaction processing times considerably.

The provider of our clinical system demonstrated online appointments and repeat prescriptions to all partners on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013. From this meeting the partners have committed to the purchase and implementation of the software needed for online appointments. They will also purchase additional software for text messaging. Changes to our recall system will also be implemented which will make further use of new text messaging facilities that we intend to implement in 2013 as well.

2. **ACTION** - The surgery will investigate the possibility of re-opening telephone lines during the lunch period  
**OUTCOMES** - The routine appointment phone lines are closed between 1:30 and 2:30pm allowing time for staff to complete various administrative tasks allowing the afternoon session to run as smoothly as possible. The emergency line always remains open. Our review concluded that the existing setup was satisfactory and no immediate changes were needed.
3. **ACTION** - Need to reduce the number of people who do not attend pre-booked appointments.  
**OUTCOMES** – About 15% of appointments are not attended and no cancellation received. The majority are nurse appointments. The practice has decided to implement a text reminder system to help reduce some of these wasted appointments. All staff are well aware of the problem and do their best too ensure that patients are reminded of the need to cancel appointments in good time.
4. **ACTION** - Although the telephone consultations are liked by the majority there are still some frustrations. Making all GP's adopt the telephone appointment system should be avoided.  
**OUTCOMES** – No new GP's offer telephone appointments so we continue to offer a balanced and varied system to match the varying needs of all or patients.

### **Priority 2 – Waiting Times**

The results of the survey generally indicated that waiting times are NOT a major concern and most patients usually accept that unavoidable delays are acceptable. Frustration does exist when there are exceptionally long waits for our duty team. Improvements can still be made to avoid delays wherever possible and to help improve the management of patient expectation.

1. **ACTION** - The method of prioritising children attending the duty team will be investigated and improvements implemented where practical to do so  
**OUTCOMES** - Children presenting with chronic illness/symptoms are fast-tracked. The receptionist will ring through to the duty GP who will take appropriate action.

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2. **ACTION** The surgery will seek to improve the timeliness of (ringback) telephone consultations.  
**OUTCOMES** – All GP's were reminded of the need to conduct timely ringbacks wherever possible. Extenuating circumstances occasionally prevent this, but it is not the norm.
  
3. **ACTION** - Always ensure that patients are advised at check-in if there are any significant delays in duty or for routine appointments  
**OUTCOMES** – Any wait over 30 minutes is advised to patients on booking into reception. Patients will, of course, be advised on request of expected wait times.

**Priority 3 - Patient Education and Awareness**

In addition to the existing facilities, the survey indicated that patients would appreciate the following:

1. **ACTION** - The patient group will construct a regular newsletter to be sent to patients either electronically, for patient collection at reception or by post. The newsletter should include information about services and availability plus introduce specific health campaigns.  
**OUTCOMES** – Unfortunately we have not yet created a newsletter as we had hoped. We do however update our facebook page regularly, and our TV bulletin is still updated monthly with any latest news or changes.
  
2. **ACTION** - Investigate the possibility of e-mailing patients directly with surgery news  
**OUTCOMES** – As no newsletter was published, action against this requirement was postponed
  
3. **ACTION** - Ensure that the Sunnyside Website and Facebook page are well advertised to patients.  
**OUTCOMES** - The Sunnyside website and facebook page were widely advertised on the TV bulletin, by clinicians and receptionists on request and also via the online surveys.

*Thank you for your continued help and support to the surgery.*

*Dr D S Raw*

*Senior Partner*

***Our Opening Times:***

*Core opening times are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. We also offer extended hours appointments according to an alternating bi-weekly schedule (Week 1 – Tuesday and Thursday 6:30pm to 8pm; Week 2 Saturday 8am to 11:15am). Please see our website or ask a receptionist for further details.*